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IMPORTANT NOTICE

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EDWIN L. WISHERD

ON MARTINIQUE, A MODERN BELLE FLOUNCES IN A COSTUME TYPICAL OF THE ISLAND; AN EARLIER MARTINIQUE BEAUTY, JOSEPHINE, BECAME FIRST EMPRESS OF THE FRENCH EMPIRE (page 3).

Troubled French Empire Has Varied Peoples

DISTURBANCES in French Morocco, Madagascar, and French Indochina highlight postwar changes in the world-wide French empire. Twenty times larger than the motherland, the empire holds a fabulous assortment of peoples and cultures—most of them relatively unchanged by the superimposed colonial civilization.

France's overseas empire is the world's second-largest. French possessions and dependencies are found in Africa, Asia, and South America, as well as on most of the "Seven Seas." Islands under the tricolor range in size from mere ocean specks to one land mass—Madagascar—that approaches Texas in size.

Vast Holdings in Africa

Under French rule are some of the last frontiers of Oriental pageantry and tropical thatched-hut living. In the French East, elephant processions march past palaces with delicately spired roofs, and native royalty makes state occasions of tiger hunts. In North Africa, Moors, Berbers, and Kabyles had built up a complex design for living long before the French came. Now, beneath the domes and minarets of Islam, Arab horsemen in flowing robes flash swords and dash in review past French officials. In West Africa, primitive blacks fight the heat (illustration, page 4) and kowtow to kings whose dynasties are traced for centuries.

Africa holds the bulk of France's empire. France controls more of the huge continent than does any other power. With the exception of French Somaliland, overlooking the Red Sea outlet on the east coast, French holdings form an unbroken bloc that reaches southward from the Mediterranean past the great West African hump to the Congo River.

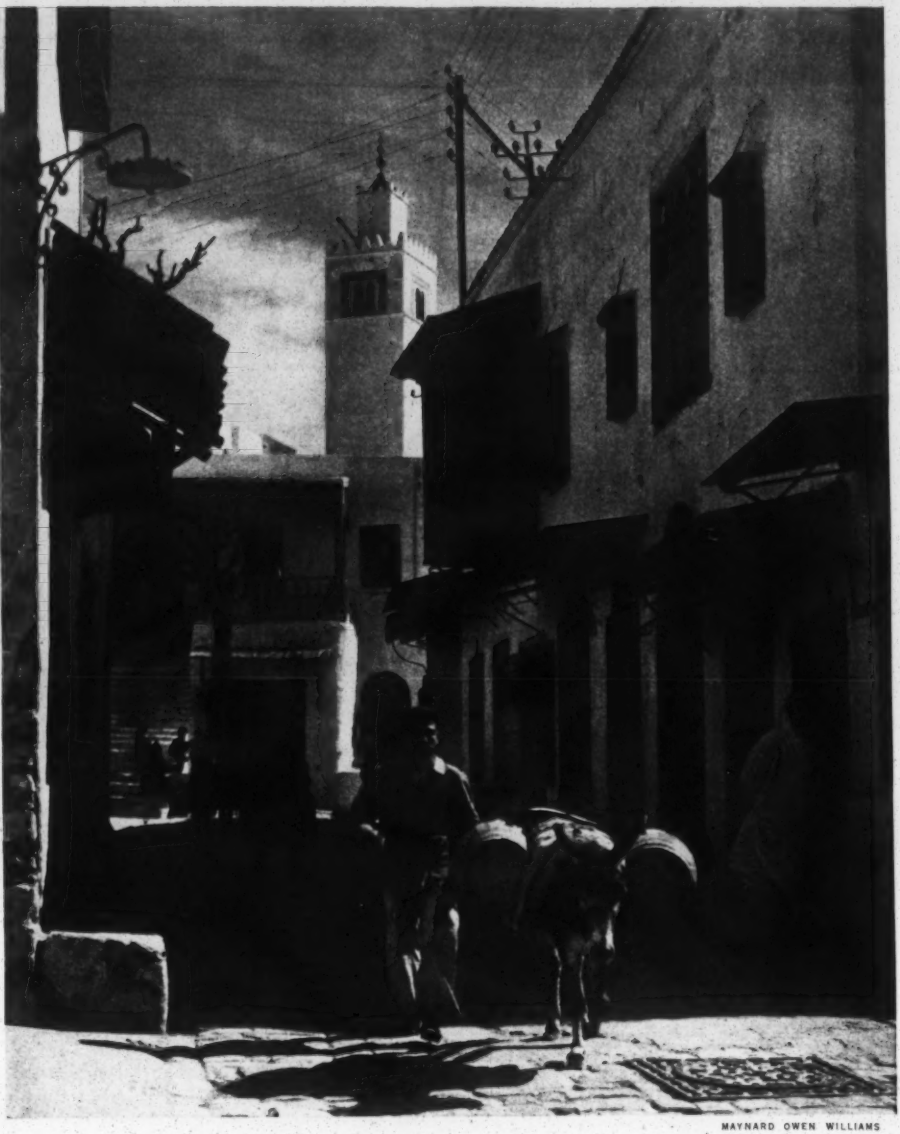
Nearest the French homeland are North African Algeria, Tunisia (illustration, page 2), and Morocco. Conquest of the wily Arab tribesmen, fighting among their well-known mountains, wadis, and deserts, produced many of France's greatest modern soldiers, and gave the world new chapters of adventure literature. Farther south, French West Africa and Equatorial Africa contain a dozen states of varying wealth and importance.

Five Bits of India Belong to France

Next in size to the African bloc is French Indochina, scene of nationalist struggles. There the Viet Nam Republic was recognized in 1946, although its boundaries and powers are controversial. Cambodia, with lush Oriental background and strange lost civilizations, has received autonomous status within the proposed French Federation.

Linked with France also are scattered bits of India: Pondichéry, Karikal, Yanaon, Mahé, and Chandernagor. An island-hopping tour of the South Pacific finds French representation in New Caledonia, New Hebrides, and on such assorted coral and volcanic dots and dashes as the Society Islands, the Tuamotu group, and the Marquesas Islands (French Oceania).

In the West Indies, France holds Guadeloupe and Martinique (illustration, cover), of sinister volcanic history. In 1902, a violent eruption on Martinique wiped out 40,000 people. More than 2,000 miles to the



MAYNARD OWEN WILLIAMS

A GLEAMING MINARET INDICATES THE MOSLEM CHARACTER OF THIS FRENCH EMPIRE TOWN

The long-eared water-carrier ambling leisurely over the flagstones of a Sidi Bou Saïd street is a familiar type of transport in this Tunisian village. A dozen miles from Tunis, capital of France's North Africa protectorate, and a stone's throw from the ruins of ancient Carthage, Sidi Bou Saïd is a pleasant resort town. Whitewashed houses rise like a dazzling stairway from the Gulf of Tunis up the steep slopes of Cape Carthage. An electric railway brings holiday throngs from Tunis to enjoy the fine bathing beach and the striking beauty of the scenery. It attracts many people, including the Bey, native ruler of Tunisia, whose summer palace rises to the northwest of the town. Most of the residents are Mohammedans. Electric wires lacing the sky are a Western contrast to the minaret, characteristic of the East. As in many of the world-scattered towns of the French Empire (page 3), there is little evidence of French influence in Sidi Bou Saïd.

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UMI

north is the smallest of the French units. Off Newfoundland, the foggy fishing isles of St. Pierre and Miquelon (less than 100 square miles in area) are the sole remnants of France's once-great North American holdings. In the Indian Ocean lies the sugar-raising island of Réunion.

In South America, sultry French Guiana is liquidating its notorious penal settlement, Devil's Island, and opening pioneer country to gold, forestry, and spice development. French Togoland, along the Slave Coast of West Africa, and French Cameroun—both of which were awarded to France as League of Nations mandated territories after World War I—now have been transferred to United Nations trusteeship. Syria and Lebanon, formerly the French-mandated Levant States, have been proclaimed independent nations.

NOTE: Units of the French Empire may be located on The World Map, which appeared as a supplement to the *National Geographic Magazine* for December, 1943. Write the Society's headquarters, Washington 6, D. C., for a price list of maps.

For additional information, see "Syria and Lebanon Taste Freedom," in the *National Geographic Magazine* for December, 1946; "Palms and Planes in the New Hebrides," August, 1944*; "Color Glows in the Guianas, French and Dutch," April, 1945*; "Eastward from Gibraltar," January, 1943*; "Madagascar: Mystery Island" and "Treasure Islands of Australasia," June, 1942*; "Dusky Tribesmen of French West Africa" and "Timbuktu and Beyond," May, 1941; "Martinique, Caribbean Question Mark," January, 1941*; "Trans-Africa Safari," September, 1938*; and "By Motor Trail Across French Indo-China," October, 1935*. (*Issues marked with an asterisk are included on a special list of Magazines available to teachers in packets of ten for $1.00.*)

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DR. ARNOLD HEIM FROM ANDERS

SIZZLING HEAT FROM THE SUDAN SUN CANNOT PENETRATE THIS HABBÉ COUNCIL HOUSE'S ROOF

The pillars are stone. An eight-foot thickness of timbers, straw, and peat insures coolness. South of Tombouctou (Timbuktu) the Habbés live in caves and huts on the face of a precipice. Their legends say they retreated here for safety long ago, crossing the Niger River on a crocodile back.

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Additional ills.: Afghanistan, Jan. 13. Borneo, Malays, Jan. 13. Brazil, Back-countryman, May 5. Burma, Kaw girl, Feb. 3. Finland, Lapps with reindeer and dogs, Oct. 14. Formosa, Apr. 14. Guam, Chamorro girl, Mar. 17. Iraq, Kurds, Apr. 28. Mexico, Seri Indians on Tiburón Island, Nov. 25. Nepal, Gurkha girl, Apr. 28. Nigeria, May 12. Paraguay, Apr. 14.
Religious Groups and Ceremonies: Ill.: Burma, Boys in ceremonial costumes riding to temple, Jan. 20.
Shepherds: Ills.: Palestine, Arab shepherd near Sea of Galilee, Oct. 28. Scotland, Shepherding flock through Inverurie, Nov. 11.
Sports: Sports Have Influenced England's Victories, 1 ill., Mar. 24.
Additional ill.: Washington, Skiers in Mt. Rainier National Park, Apr. 21.
Stained Glass: *See* Windows.
Statues and Images: Ills.: Afghanistan, Buddha of Bamian, Jan. 13. Easter Island, May 12. Poland, Kosciuszko, Kraków, Feb. 3.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

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